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Consumer Price Index, St. Louis area – December 2019

Area prices inched down 0.1 percent over the past two months, up 2.1 percent from a year ago

Prices in the St. Louis area, as measured by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), inched down 0.1 percent for the two months ending in December 2019, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Stanley W. Suchman noted that the December index was influenced by lower prices for gasoline and apparel. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, bi-monthly changes may reflect seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months, the CPI-U advanced 2.1 percent. The index for all items less food and energy rose 1.6 percent over the year. Energy prices advanced 6.2 percent, largely the result of higher prices for gasoline. Food prices rose 2.8 percent. (See [table 1.](#))

Food

Food prices increased 2.3 percent for the two months ending in December. (See table 1.) Prices for food at home rose 3.1 percent and prices for food away from home were up 1.4 percent.

Over the year, food prices rose 2.8 percent. Prices for food at home increased 3.2 percent since a year ago, and prices for food away from home rose 2.4 percent.

Energy

The energy index decreased 2.8 percent for the two months ending in December, largely reflecting a decline of 5.2 percent in prices for gasoline. Prices for electricity advanced 0.5 percent, while prices for natural gas service were virtually unchanged for the same period.

Energy prices advanced 6.2 percent over the year. Lower prices for natural gas service (-2.6 percent) did little to moderate a 13.4-percent rise in prices for gasoline. Prices paid for electricity were unchanged over the year.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy decreased 0.3 percent in the latest two-month period. Lower prices for apparel (-8.4 percent) and other goods and services (-1.5 percent) were partially offset by higher prices for shelter (0.4 percent).

Over the year, the index for all items less food and energy rose 1.6 percent. Components contributing to the increase included education and communication (4.6 percent), medical care (2.5 percent), and shelter (2.2 percent). Partly offsetting the increases were lower prices for apparel (-19.2 percent).

CPI-W

The Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) for the St. Louis metropolitan area for December 2019 was 229.500. The CPI-W inched up 0.1 percent over the two months and rose 2.3 percent over the year.

The February 2020 Consumer Price Index for the St. Louis area is scheduled to be released on March 11, 2020.

Technical Note

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change in prices over time in a fixed market basket of goods and services. The Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes CPIs for two population groups: (1) a CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) which covers approximately 93 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers approximately 29 percent of the total population. The CPI-U includes, in addition to wage earners and clerical workers, groups such as professional, managerial, and technical workers, the self-employed, short-term workers, the unemployed, and retirees and others not in the labor force.

The CPI is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, and fuels, transportation fares, charges for doctors' and dentists' services, drugs, and the other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. Each month, prices are collected in 75 urban areas across the country from about 6,000 housing units and approximately 22,000 retail establishments—department stores, supermarkets, hospitals, filling stations, and other types of stores and service establishments. All taxes directly associated with the purchase and use of items are included in the index.

The index measures price changes from a designated reference date (1982-84) that equals 100.0. An increase of 16.5 percent, for example, is shown as 116.5. This change can also be expressed in dollars as follows: the price of a base period "market basket" of goods and services in the CPI has risen from \$10 in 1982-84 to \$11.65. For further details see the CPI home page on the Internet at www.bls.gov/cpi and the BLS Handbook of Methods, Chapter 17, The Consumer Price Index, available on the Internet at www.bls.gov/opub/hom/pdf/homch17.pdf.

In calculating the index, price changes for the various items in each location are averaged together with weights that represent their importance in the spending of the appropriate population group. Local data are then combined to obtain a U.S. city average. Because the sample size of a local area is smaller, the local area index is subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than the national index. In addition, local indexes are not adjusted for seasonal influences. As a result, local area indexes show greater volatility than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. **NOTE: Area indexes do not measure differences in the level of prices between cities; they only measure the average change in prices for each area since the base period.**

The St. Louis, MO-IL, area covered in this release includes Bond, Calhoun, Clinton, Jersey, Macoupin, Madison, Monroe, and St. Clair counties in Illinois; and Franklin, Jefferson, Lincoln, St. Charles, St. Louis, and Warren counties and St. Louis City in Missouri.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, St. Louis, MO-IL (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from -		
	Oct. 2019	Nov. 2019	Dec. 2019	Dec. 2018	Oct. 2019	Nov. 2019
All items	231.653	-	231.420	2.1	-0.1	-
All items (1967 = 100)	688.049	-	687.357			
Food and beverages	256.139	-	262.686	3.2	2.6	-
Food	255.736	-	261.652	2.8	2.3	-
Food at home	230.013	232.364	237.179	3.2	3.1	2.1
Cereals and bakery products	200.128	-	214.124	-0.9	7.0	-
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	249.357	-	249.685	2.3	0.1	-
Dairy and related products	161.166	-	169.712	4.4	5.3	-
Fruits and vegetables	347.061	-	386.978	12.4	11.5	-
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1)	173.237	-	168.275	-1.1	-2.9	-
Other food at home	227.101	-	226.620	0.6	-0.2	-
Food away from home	298.128	-	302.273	2.4	1.4	-
Alcoholic beverages	232.455	-	245.188	7.4	5.5	-
Housing	225.242	-	225.695	1.8	0.2	-
Shelter	267.568	265.767	268.672	2.2	0.4	1.1
Rent of primary residence	246.825	248.729	249.661	3.2	1.1	0.4
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2)	279.567	280.650	282.201	2.7	0.9	0.6
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2)	279.567	280.650	282.201	2.7	0.9	0.6
Fuels and utilities	209.974	-	210.400	0.5	0.2	-
Household energy	177.804	178.166	178.320	-0.9	0.3	0.1
Energy services	179.451	179.777	179.921	-0.9	0.3	0.1
Electricity	176.808	177.626	177.609	0.0	0.5	0.0
Utility (piped) gas service	151.817	151.266	151.652	-2.6	-0.1	0.3
Household furnishings and operations	120.760	-	119.614	0.5	-0.9	-
Apparel	137.927	-	126.304	-19.2	-8.4	-
Transportation	192.795	-	189.202	4.8	-1.9	-
Private transportation	194.464	-	191.101	4.8	-1.7	-
New and used motor vehicles(3)	93.141	-	92.279	0.6	-0.9	-
New vehicles(1)	207.469	-	210.765	2.2	1.6	-
Used cars and trucks(1)	297.724	-	293.929	-0.3	-1.3	-
Motor fuel	229.277	219.444	217.447	12.9	-5.2	-0.9
Gasoline (all types)	225.314	215.428	213.550	13.4	-5.2	-0.9
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4)	216.230	206.723	205.093	13.8	-5.2	-0.8
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5)	272.004	260.775	256.261	11.3	-5.8	-1.7
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4)	237.022	226.410	223.522	10.5	-5.7	-1.3
Motor vehicle insurance(1)	574.694	-	574.694	-2.1	0.0	-
Medical care	466.853	-	465.883	2.5	-0.2	-
Recreation(3)	118.125	-	117.855	1.5	-0.2	-
Education and communication(3)	140.255	-	141.224	4.6	0.7	-
Tuition, other school fees, and childcare(1) ...	1,259.486	-	1,259.487	3.2	0.0	-
Other goods and services	335.673	-	330.798	0.0	-1.5	-
Commodity and service group						
Commodities	186.785	-	185.887	1.6	-0.5	-
Commodities less food and beverages	152.280	-	148.660	0.6	-2.4	-
Nondurables less food and beverages	208.883	-	201.092	0.7	-3.7	-
Durables	101.399	-	100.792	0.6	-0.6	-
Services	277.824	-	278.233	2.4	0.1	-
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less shelter	221.131	-	220.455	2.0	-0.3	-
All items less medical care	219.863	-	219.670	2.0	-0.1	-
Commodities less food	155.799	-	152.654	0.9	-2.0	-

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, St. Louis, MO-IL (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) - Continued

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from -		
	Oct. 2019	Nov. 2019	Dec. 2019	Dec. 2018	Oct. 2019	Nov. 2019
Nondurables	233.079	-	232.059	2.0	-0.4	-
Nondurables less food.....	211.695	-	205.316	1.2	-3.0	-
Services less rent of shelter(2).....	295.914	-	295.653	2.5	-0.1	-
Services less medical care services.....	260.519	-	260.864	2.2	0.1	-
Energy	202.464	197.789	196.881	6.2	-2.8	-0.5
All items less energy	237.510	-	237.803	1.8	0.1	-
All items less food and energy	234.525	-	233.894	1.6	-0.3	-

Footnotes

(1) Indexes on an March 1978=100 base.

(2) Indexes on a November 1982=100 base.

(3) Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

(4) Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

(5) Index on a December 1993=100.

- Data not available.